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November 26, 1995

Notes on (dream relating to my talk before Vietnam Veterans Institute)

Dreams: I am learning a kind of fighting, from a man who's written a book about it and who demonstrated it. It allows kicking, and hitting the head, without helmets. The book is to be followed with two joined wires, with little beads on the arms and legs.

People (Nazis) are commiserating, or criticising each other, that they don't do much, nobody does, to keep Hitler company in his lonely exile. He sits at home in his little house, eats very little, no one visits. It is "ironic"...but is the irony that he escaped execution, or that he is so fallen, so lonely?

When I wake up, it takes a while to remember: Did Hitler get off? Did he escape? Finally, I recall his suicide.

What did it mean to allow for capital punishment for these first crimes tried by an international criminal court? Was there any consideration given to not doing so--since none of these crimes had ever led to criminal trials for high officials ever before?

(And since some of the judges were comparably guilty? E.g., Stalin, for complicity with aggressive war? How could that aspect of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, its relation to the attack on Poland, and Russia's attacks on Poland and Finland be otherwise interpreted? Let alone, crimes against humanity and war crimes: including area bombing?)

What I could have said to the audience at the Vietnam Veterans Institute:

Several have said they have nothing to apologize for. (They mean: the failure was not their fault, they could have won the war if their advice was followed. Wrong. The one challenge they faced from the floor was why they did not state this during the war.)

Do I have nothing to apologize for?

They all think I do: though, in Goering's words I was truly "not guilty in the sense of the indictment."

Actually, I could have said: I am the only one in this room that has stood trial for actions I took during the war. ONLY FORMER OFFICIAL

(If I was guilty, for those actions, is not McNamara, for his recent book? Did he get it all properly cleared? On the other hand, if I was guilty, then why is McNamara so widely condemned for not revealing his views earlier? Do all those who condemn him, applaud me? (Scheer, by linking me with Fonda, emphasizes that we

opposed the war and were right to do so: not that I did 26-24 years earlier what McNamara did by way of revelation. And as Fonda says, they didn't just oppose the war, they supported North Vietnam; I did not. How far would they have gone to promote NVN victory?

(Would I, unlike them, have supported/encouraged the assassination of Ho Chi Minh if I thought it would have ended the war? Probably so. Or Diem. Or...who? However, with the possible exception of Ho (not really: just analogy with Hitler, where it would have made a difference; or Stalin; or Mao; or Saddam Hussein (or Nixon/Kissinger! Or, in the othr direction, JFK: he was the one assassinated, and it did make a difference, as Stone says, though not so stark a difference as he claims). This thought doesn't compel one to support assassination of leaders, however: consider Rabin (where a relatively good case can be made that removing him would make a difference in the direction the killer desired). (To reject the case for killing Rabin is to emphasize the elements of imminence and thus certainty and lack of alternatives. Rabin was not a true "pursuer," and the rabbis are not endorsing the notion of analogizing "pursuit." Yigal was the pursuer, just before he shot.

Which high officer in my audience had not participated in an active, consummated conspiracy to involve the country in an unwanted, aggressive war.

(Question: to lawyers: how much does history of Geneva and aftermath bear on issue of whether actions by NVN against "SVN" constituted civil war? How does this bear on whether actions "in support of SVN's independence and integrity"--by the nation that "created" and supported SVN--constituted "aggression," or "war in violation of international treaties and understandings"? Just how did our relations with the government of SVN--e.g., surrounding Diem's death and later--bear on our "obligations" to them?

Many hawks in government and outside assumed then, and still do, that the assassination of Diem somehow increased the strengtgh of our obligations to avoid defeat, our commitment to Vietnam. But was this in the sense that it made our intervention more likely; more likely to be needed, and harder to excuse rejecting it? Or, simply an extension and deepening of our involvement? (It wasn't, really; we were hardly arms-length or uninvolved before). Or in some legal, or moral sense? In reality, that underestimates how involved and committed we already were befor that. What it did do, was probably bring the necessity for US troops to stave off defeat closer, and make it more sure; and eliminate one plausible exit line, through Diem's negotiations or through dissassociation with Diem. (Though Minh could have negotiated effectively). There was a danger in losing Diem, as an excuse for dissassociation, and then trying to stave off US withdrawal from Vietnam for another year, till the 64 election.

(see
Matthews:
JFK/RFK

So Speer should have totally dissassociated himself with the regime when he learned, one way or another, of the Final Solution?

(Note that both Speer's accuser and Speer himself give quite a bit of significance to the question of whether he was at the Posen speech. Was this the "500 bodies" speech? Was that really to ensure they were all implicated? Why, then, wasn't there more paper circulated, if that was the aim?)

Who in history has done likewise? Who with respect to Vietnam? No one has done a study of those who left: why they did, when they did, and how they behaved subsequently. Did they take documents? (Schlesinger and Sorensen did! What did they do with them? What did they reveal and what they conceal and/or lie about? No one has ever addressed this--say, in the Historians' Associations--or addressed questions of what they should have done! Ernest May? Kissinger? i.e. academicians. Bundy, Rostow. Shultz. Halperin.

[Compaq]

C:\auto\Vann.71

November 18, 1988

{This is the start of my writing schedule, my month of writing, November, 1988....Off the top of my head...let's see where it will lead...}

ANECDOTES (ITEMS, QUOTES)

PERSONAL

--My fantasies of guerrilla war; my long stories to Gloria about behind-the-lines actions as a guerrilla in WWII (she could be part of the team).

Reading Beau Geste, and all the P.C. Wren books on the Foreign Legion. Book report on Beau Geste; my first French words, "Aux armes, les Arabes." (Not reacting, apparently, to the anti-Semitic passages).

Favorite movie: Four Feathers. (Man, accused of cowardice, because he resigns his commission to stay with his new wife--i.e., acting to preserve his relation with a woman, in (he believes) her interest-- believed a slacker by his best friends, acts as a spy behind the lines in Arab costume and stained face, saves their lives without their knowing at the time....like Beau Geste, who takes the blame for a theft, protects a woman...

(Other movies: How Green Was My Valley, Gable-Tracey, Greer Garson (White Cliffs of Dover...I in love), Tracey-Hepburn, Abbott and Costello (just saw an imitation of them for an ad)

Harry gives me Seven Pillars of Wisdom for a birthday present. Later, I read it during landing exercises off Sardinia, while I control floating dumps. In Morocco, I ride camels in oasis in Zagora and make love under palm trees--while little boys watch gravely, with flies clinging to their snot--after climbing the tower of a fort up to the Tricouleur, waving over the gun embrasures... (The whole Moroccan trip!)

Favorite book: Northwest Passage, where (in the movie) Spencer Tracey, Col. Rogers, fights the French and Indians Indian-style (for the British!), as a guerrilla...for the British Empire. Read all of Kenneth Roberts, including Oliver Wiswell, about a Tory (and a book in favor of Benedict Arnold! Or is that it? Reread).

Kaysen tells Joe Kraft, to demonstrate my oddness, instability, in a piece that appears while we were underground, that I "used" to dress up like an Arab for dinner guests. One of the few times that I put on my djellaba and burnoose and turban was, unfortunately, for him, after the second Moroccan trip. But my identification was not (much) with the Arabs--though I liked to stand like a Berber, a Toureg (Beau Geste) "blue man"--but with TE

Lawrence, the imperial agent fighting with the natives.

(Compare the comic book heroes: Captain Marvel, who appears to be a little boy, Billy Batson; Superman, who appears to be mild-mannered Clark Kent (wimp, nerd); The Spirit, thought to be dead. (What was the Saint's cover?) Is this not part of the spirit of being a spy, the attraction: the boy's fantasy of being far more brave, adventurous, resourceful, dangerous, trusted...than, in what passes for "real life" he appears to be? Look at nerd/wimp Colby! And the Alec Guinness roles in Le Carre.)

I not only live all this out, with "Lawrence of Vietnam" Lansdale, of the Philippines and Vietnam--and the other Lawrences of Vietnam, Conein, Scotton and Vann--but I live out a specific LeCarre book, "The Looking Glass War." (Reread; along with Yellow Fever, by Larteguy, on Lansdale, and The Centurions).

VANN

(Check with Sheehan on who accompanied Vann to talk to Buzhardt; find out what Vann is supposed to have said. Also, his brother, who allegedly overheard Vann talking to me on the phone about my "secret strategy" for the trial. Since there was no secret strategy, and that must have been apparent to Vann, it may be--as Harry assumed, on reading this account--that Vann was simply telling Buzhardt things he would have known I would not mind being told. After all, it would not have hurt us noticeably to have had an FBI agent sit in on our meetings--as probably happened. (CR?)

Why would Vann have done this? Sheehan totally omitted the fact that Hunt had a file on Vann in the White House, and was warning Haig about Vann's supposed files and intent to write a book: "We don't need another Ellsberg." This at the beginning of 1972. Vann was not only actually under suspicion, but he must have known this. Moreover, he was under pressure for his actions in support of Chau, and I was also known to be a friend of Chau's; see the story in Snapp that it was because of Chau that I gave the Pentagon Papers.

Moreover--I've never thought of this before--there was the case of the Counsellor to the Embassy, later Attorney General (or Deputy) for Illinois, who directly imitated my example in July of 1971 and prepared to take home reports of Embassy knowledge of drug-trafficking (!), corruption, and of abuses of Phoenix (for which he had written the "emergency laws"). (Find him and check!). The Embassy and State knew about this! They must have been

specifically anxious about other imitators, starting with Vann! Vann was interviewed: Could I get his interviews, on FOIA?

Thus, Vann had a major interest in distancing himself from me. I assume this is the major reason he was expressing so much outrage and condemnation publicly: Neil doesn't even mention this incentive or hypothesis. The fact is he was as close as ever, afterwards. And he had to justify continuing to see me; perhaps he implied that he was gathering information.

As for "telling HAK and Buzhardt how to beat my strategy, win my case"...what could he have told them? Nothing that would match the effects for me of appearing in my defense! Neil simply assumes that I couldn't have counted on what he would say; "He wouldn't have known till he got on the stand." He assumes he would have been self-serving, or might have been, though he probably would allow for the possibility of a quixotic, impulsive gesture by Vann. But NS simply doesn't appreciate the nature of the friendship.

We were, after all, on opposite sides on US policy, by this time. Vann believed--apparently, for a long time--that US geopolitical interests prohibited our accepting a defeat. (After all, this was my own view in 1965; and in 1971, I had read the PP, he hadn't). In 1971-72 we were (very) friendly adversaries; he was as committed on his side as I was on mine.

I used to think to myself, while he lived: "John would never betray me...except for a very good reason." Meaning, a reason based on his commitment to policy, "the cause": where he saw higher stakes, and no alternative to betraying me. That was the way I had acted with respect to my closest friends, when I copied the Pentagon Papers; and I respected both sides of that in me, that I took their interests very seriously, yet was capable of weighing other interests (not, personally self-serving) even higher.

It was, in fact, part of my admiration for John--and my identification with him, empathy, a sense of kindred spirit--that he put The Cause very high, higher than love or friendship. While at the same time, he put friendship higher than his career: contrary to what Neil concludes and suggests, particularly in the case of this very alleged incident. (He has no other real examples of this! If Neil had interpreted it correctly, it would stand virtually alone, and in contrast to his willingness to sacrifice his career for Chau, or his life for Ramsay; and his offer to testify at my trial. All the latter were characteristic of him, expected by me, whereas this incident, as Neil interprets it, would be totally uncharacteristic. To protect himself, without significantly hurting me--or even to hurt me, in my trial, "for the good of the cause"--would, on the other hand, have been not uncharacteristic.

Likewise, Neil himself betrayed me in precisely that spirit: and I could respect and accept that (though I thought he had not

trusted me as much as he should, nor investigated my inclinations enough, and was ultimately "inconsiderate"). What I found most acceptable was his secret copying of the papers, as "insurance," which is after all what I myself had done. Even if he had trusted me appropriately, to assure himself that whatever happened he would have access to a copy reflected a proper appreciation of the importance of the Papers.

(see anecdotes about Neil). (see Salisbury corrections).

auto/pleiku

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23 June 1995

Having just read Suzan Travis-Cline's account of JTM and the episode of Pleiku and Qui Nhon this morning, and discussed JTM with her this afternoon, I told Michael this evening, about my "bachelor" lifestyle in Washington. I was working 70-hour weeks, no time to go out in the evening.

Somehow I got to telling the story of RFK in 1964, not remembering what year the Vienna Summit had been in (he thought it might have been around the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis). I said that had made a bad impression on me at the time, but later when I was in the Pentagon I had understood it. I told the story of being up all night monitoring the retaliation raid to Pleiku, February 6, and working on follow-up to that. Four days later, being briefed on the Qui Nhon attack by a Joint Staff officer, he mentioned Pleiku and I recognized that as something that I almost surely should know about, but I had no idea what it referred to or when. I turned to my typewriter and wrote that: "Someone has just mentioned the name Pleiku, and I have no idea..."

Michael commented, from his Deerfield experience (and from an episode in One Hundred Years of Solitude, when the village is attacked by insomnia bugs...) that this is a common effect of sleeplessness. (I had associated it more with the fast rush of events--drinking from a fire hose). True, I had had very little sleep since word of the Pleiku attack.

He also mentioned that in this state, one didn't care about anything: blowing the world up, whatever...

I realized that the very night of that briefing--after writing that perception down--I had been up all night gathering accounts of atrocities to help McNamara persuade LBJ, the next morning, to start Rolling Thunder.

When I recalled, many years later at the Ram Dass Symposium, how consequential, and horrible, my participation that night had been, I couldn't explain, then or later, how I had been willing to do that; and why I didn't leave the Pentagon at that time. I simply had no explanation...

Michael has made me realize a major part of the answer: I was exhausted, working night and day, with almost no sleep...(as in the Cuban Missile Crisis: where in the end I virtually broke down at the thought that JFK had almost traded away the missiles in Turkey, blown it...)

I remember asking myself, after watching McGeorge Bundy and JTM juggle, running from one spinning plate to another: Can you really run the world this way? The result being, Vietnam.

But as MGE points out ("from my experience at Deerfield") it

not only affects memory, but judgment, and affect (or lack of it).

Dream: missile, shoots off: will start war: there is only the time left till the reply comes. What to do? Two men: do they go into SF, find woman? Play with each other? None of this seems very worthwhile. Look at nature? I see missile head, in meadow, by itself: mobile; presumably very well guarded (no one in sight)

Family gathering, of economic historians, Polanyi types, talking of the work of a colleague. I ask, What is "the task" of which they quote one as having referred to, to which he must redouble his efforts? What is he trying to understand, with such urgency? To what effect will the understanding be put? "The movement of peasants off the land, into the cities." I ask the previous question. One of them, head like Makhijani. His child smears his forehead with jam, very artfully: he is an (American) Indian in paint...

Do I admit to them what my dreams consist of: the need to unhook these missiles, the race to dismantle them before they are launched? The race. (Who has the image of the two curves? Of three races, with the Nazis, the Russians, now--with the missiles, the human race's task to disarm the warheads, before: they are stolen, threatened as by Chechens (Crimson Tide--before Budyonnovsk!), launched...with Americans and Rujssians imagining that the appropriate response to this prospect or event is to preempt or retaliate, against...someone, anyone who is armed with nucs and may launch (Pallid Giant).

[Mhh said the other day at lunch: He thought in 1969 that when men landed on the moon...he really thought it would have an epochal effect on human consciousness, that they would see the earth as one, beyond nationalism, create a global, species consciousness, erase borders. But people don't remember that momoment; it had remarkably little effect on awareness, or behavior. He thinks many expected that. But it didn't change anything. (Not ever the war: as I and Tony fantasized, if one of the astronauts had said, We aren't coming back unless you settle that...) (Unlike the downfall of the Wall...)]

An unusual image for me: I am in a race, to reverse this movement toward nuclear explosion before the explosion occurs. Like an action movie: others are preparing the launch, I am...beset by obstacles, accidents, distractions, personal problems, other crises (Die Hard, with a Vengeance; end of Schwarzenegger movie...literal warheads, to be launched by ME terrorists) My action movie...

I just described to mIchael the race to achieve a test

ban...Perils of Pauline...and, why do they want to test?

A scenario: the race to end the VN war before it escalated, before Westy went north (where nuclear explosions were likely) (see what McNamara revealed in his book)...

Me/us (pick-up team, amateurs, volunteers, unpaid) against Them (in several countries). So there is conflict, adversaries...not just (our) obsession, self-appointed task...

But the others do not consciously will explosion (now); they do contingently, but they suppose themselves to be pursuing other goals, merely threatening, preparing, not only "so these weapons will never go off" (Chechens didn't take hostages "in order that they will never be killed"...but not in order to kill them, either; in hopes of achieving other objectives, not all self-conscious, articulated, admitted...to others, or in some cases perhaps to themselves. Who were they most angry at, afraid of, desirous of hurting in retaliation? Who did they wish to avenge, to save, protect, whose honor to protect? Who did they wish to humiliate, to destroy, to "make sorry"? (Journal of Psychohistory questions).

Like crew of Enola Gay, they know nothing of the bomb they will drop, nor of the target. (See charges by Chinese of American germ warfare in Korea; the pilots "confessing" claimed they did not know contents of strangely marked bombs. [Could there have been something to these charges? Answer to that could resolve an old question of mine, from England!]) [as, more on Hiss case: one way or the other. The typewriter...] [So, get the GRU files...]

In m=y mind, on my story, I have focussed either on: what I thought, did; or on Them, their values, obedience, etc. Not on the interaction. (I was one of Them; in 1965, They (SDS rally, teach-ins) were the antiwar movement, I thought; then I switched sides; but even when I was in VN, there was: my team, the Good Guys; MACV, USAF, the bombers; GVN, peasants, NLF, Hanoi; at home, the antiwar movement, Goldwater/right, OSD...

After 1969, my race with Nixon/HAK; I join the Moratorium, but they (and I) are unaware of the November Ultimatum...Bundy: the kids won't let him; but the kids don't know (and they're out on Quaaludes)....Finally, the plumbers are out to neutralize me, while I don't know it.

Theme: I don't know they're after me. They don't know what cause they're serving (they're told a false story about me; as, the Hiroshima story, the MP story, the race with Hitler for the bomb, the missile gap, Colson offshore Guatemala

(Suzan Travis-Cline, historian of JTM, was clearly put off yesterday by my mentioning that the VC were terrorists. "But they were terrorists for a purpose; when they killed people, they knew who they were killing, and why." "Unlike the GVN soldiers..." But that made the GVN soldiers gangsters, rapists, killing not for a

purpose. When VC killed people in a bus, or babies of a village chief, yes, they knew why (and when we "replied" with bombing, we knew why): that's what terrorism is. My point had been, anyway, that the fact that the Bosnian Serbs were terrorists didn't make them beatable: after all, the VC were also terrorists. (We were the wrong side; but that didn't make them the good side. What is the moral: Be very wary of opposing "self"-determination violently; or of encouraging violent self-determination, or participating in it...? Be aware of ambiguities of the "self" that is to be autonomous; from what/who? and, autonomous to do what, to who? Who is to be disadvantaged, oppressed, as a result? What other "selves" are to be oppressed minorities as a consequence of this "self-expression/manifestation/ liberation? (Do the various "liberation" movements at home raise this question: Gay, women, black, Chicano, handicapped...? Not obviously: though affirmative action is attacked on this ground... Also, "reparations."

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